

Aalt Willem Heringa:

“Legal education for the future: A truly comparative curricular design”

ABSTRACT

In my paper about Curriculum design and comparative law, I describe the possibilities and do's and don't's of a 'European Law School', which focuses not in the first place on a national legal system but on offering a curriculum which is structurally based on comparative law and which addresses the multi-layered EU legal order. The paper describes the possibilities and challenges and the link with a law school's research profile and expertise and staff hiring policies. And furthermore, the paper argues for a diverse EU wide landscape of European legal education, since the educational settings differ significantly, because labour markets show great diversity, because of the impact of IT innovations, and the different needs of different sectors of societies. In that respect curriculum design will also have to take into account the demands for lawyers with non-legal skills and competences: collaborative skills, knowledge of social sciences, business, and other domains. A law school has to set a coherent strategy about its best place in the educational (national and EU wide) landscape, and to make a consistent choice as to the best curricular options for the future, with respect to its position in the student-markets, the labour market demands, its local or EU setting, choice of language for EU wide courses or programs, link to research profile. My personal perspective is for a diverse EU wide law schools and legal curriculums landscape: focus on European Law Schools like programmes; programmes with focus on local demands; programmes for multi-disciplinary skills; broad academic skills; professional skills, and combinations. Yes, diversity, instead of one model, or instead of even one model per country. In that respect I have argued before for a group of law schools from different EU member states offering a European Law School like curriculum, with avenues for collaboration and recognition, and with powers of persuasion as to the labour markets, policy makers and law makers and the bars that indeed these lawyers who have great skills through their multi-level and comparative law education, are a true asset and have great added value.